

Rape is no longer an isolated by-product of war; it is increasingly a tool to advance war aims. In recent years in Bosnia, Rwanda, and East Timor soldiers and militiamen used rape on an organized, systematic, and sustained basis to further their goal of ethnic cleansing. In some cases, women were kidnaped, interned in camps and houses, forced to do labor, and subjected to frequent rape and sexual assault.

I was pleased that the United Nations, in setting up the war crime tribunals for the Balkans and Rwanda, recognized rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Nevertheless, I was very disappointed by the repeated failure of the international community, especially in the former Yugoslavia, to see that those who were indicted for perpetrating these crimes were brought to justice. It appeared that the major step forward taken by the creation of the tribunals would be nullified by inaction.

Finally, on February 22, 2001, the international tribunal in The Hague sentenced three Bosnian Serbs to prison for rape during the Bosnian war. I was very pleased the court took this step. Clearly, there is still much work to be done. Estimates are that up to 20,000 women in Yugoslavia were systematically raped as part of a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Many perpetrators still remain at large.

Nevertheless, the court has stated loud and clear that those who use rape as an instrument of war will no longer be able to escape justice. They will be arrested, tried, and convicted. As Judge Florence Mumba of Zambia stated, "Lawless opportunists should expect no mercy, no matter how low their position in the chain of command may be."

I commend the victims who courageously came forward to confront their attackers and offer testimony that helped lead to the convictions. The international community, and women in particular, owe them a debt of gratitude.

On International Women's Day, I urge the Administration and the international community to join me in continuing the fight to end the practice of rape as an instrument of war, and to pursue justice for its victims.

Perhaps nowhere in the world today is there a clearer test of our commitment of the cause of women's rights than Afghanistan.

To put it simply, I am shocked and dismayed at the treatment of women in Afghanistan by the Taliban. Afghan women have been banned from work and school and are largely confined in their homes behind darkened windows. They are required to wear full-length veils, or burka, when in public and must be accompanied by a male member of the family. In addition, access to medical services has been dramatically

reduced. Widows are not allowed to work and must beg to subsist.

The women of Afghanistan, who have seen their families destroyed by war, are now having their economic life and their fundamental human rights stripped away, and the violations of Afghan women's basic human rights have pushed an already war-torn and war-weary Afghanistan to the brink of disaster.

The suffering of Afghan women and girls must not be ignored by the United States and the international community. I am working on legislation with Senator BOXER to address their plight and put pressure on the Taliban to respect basic human rights.

On International Women's Day, the United States, with our history of commitment to women's rights and equality, must redouble its efforts to place respect for women's rights at the top of the international community's agenda regarding Afghanistan.

We must debate and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We must rededicate ourselves and our resources to international family planning programs. We must enforce tough anti-trafficking legislation. We must not ignore the gross violations of the human rights of Afghan women.

We cannot afford to remain silent. We cannot afford to place women's rights on a second tier of concern of U.S. foreign policy. On International Women's Day, the United States and the international community must take a strong stand and issue a clear warning to those who attempt to rob women of basic rights that the world's governments will no longer ignore these abuses, or allow them to continue without repercussion.

PRAYER AT THE HOUSE THE SENATE BUILT PROGRAM

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, this morning, Members of the U.S. Senate came together to kick off the House the Senate Built Program with Habitat for Humanity International. Today's event partnered Members of the Senate with HUD Secretary Mel Martinez, Habitat founder Millard Fuller, and a host of building partners to begin work with the Spencer and Williams families on their new homes in Capitol Heights, MD.

Before the event began, Ms. Helena Spencer, mother of one of the two families who will be moving into the homes upon completion, shared with us her frustrations of living in substandard housing and her plea to God to help her find a new home for her family. Her message to us was that Habitat for Humanity was an answer to prayer. I want to share her prayer with you today, because I feel it reflects well on the work of Habitat for Humanity.

Ms. Spencer prayed:

Lord, my future looks so uncertain. It seems as if everything dear to me has been shaken or removed. He answered me, and said in His word, I will remove what can be shaken so that those things which "cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27). My life has to be built upon an unshakeable foundation. He says I'm removing from you all insecure foundation to force you to rest on the foundation of me alone. A spiritual house, in order to stand, must not be built on a flimsy foundation. Your false resting place is being shaken so that you will rely wholly on me.

With these words, Helena Spencer spoke volumes about how great a blessing Habitat for Humanity is to so many people in need. These words inspired us this morning as we worked side by side building the houses that the Spencer and Williams families will call home. These words have motivated us to see through the House the Senate Built Program to its stated end; at least one new Habitat home built by Members of the U.S. Senate in each of our home States.

I am thankful for the work of Habitat for Humanity in this country and am encouraged by the faith and hope displayed today by Ms. Helena Spencer.

RECENT SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this week, the community of Santee, CA was struck by a horrible tragedy when a student opened fire on his classmates at Santana High School. Two people were killed and 13 others were wounded in the worst episode of school violence since the mass shooting in Littleton, CO almost 2 years ago. Although students returned to school yesterday, the grief over losing two of their classmates and the memories of what occurred will stay with them forever. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families and the people of Santee, CA as they attempt to cope with this tragedy.

In an interview on Monday night, Dr. Michael Sise, the Medical Director for Trauma at Mercy Hospital, where three of the victims were treated, offered his perspective on shooting. He said, "We wouldn't be here tonight talking to you if this kid, this troubled kid, hadn't had access to a firearm. I think we have to start asking the tough questions about firearms, what they mean. Firearms turn shouting matches into shooting matches, if those two kids in Columbine had not had access to firearms they would be two weird kids still wandering around campus, instead of dead along with a lot of dead classmates. So, for us in trauma we want to get out in the community and ask our fellow members of the community the tough questions. How do we prevent this from happening again?"

The question raised by Dr. Sise is the same question that is being asked by people in Santee, CA and all over the